DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 252 SO 007 813

AUTHOR Manis, Jerome G.; And Others
TITLE The Urban Community as Laboratory: A Manual for a Graduate Seminar on Social Problems.
INSTITUTION Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo. Center for Sociological Research.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 36p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Sociological Research Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Community Study; Course Descriptions; Course Objectives; Data Analysis; Data Collection; Graduate Study; Guidelines; *Local Issues; Research Methodology; Seminars; *Social Problems; *Sociology; *Urban Studies

ABSTRACT

A manual is presented which provides a common, preliminary frame of reference for seminar participants who desire to develop procedures for studying major social problems through the use of the urban community as a laboratory. Broadly, the seminar concentrates upon providing access to data and facilitation data collection and analyses. Although designed primarily for seminar study of the local community as a laboratory, the manual also considers its possible application to other communities and universities. Seminar participants include project staff, key community professionals, enrolled sociology graduate students, and invited guests. Contents of the manual include a rationale for the seminar, the concept of the urban community as a laboratory, specifying urban social problems, objectives of seminar participants, seminar guidelines, research logistics, and the format of the seminar. An appendix contains a list of proposed research topics. (Author/KSM)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE URBAN COMMUNITY AS LABORATORY: A MANUAL FOR A GRADUATE SEMINAR ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPIN
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Jerome G. Manis
Morton O. Wagenfeld
R. Greg Emerton

SP 007 813

Center for Sociological Research
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001
1973

Additional copies may be obtained from:

Center for Sociological Research
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Price: $1.00

THE URBAN COMMUNITY AS LABORATORY: A MANUAL FOR A GRADUATE SEMINAR ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS*

Jerome G. Manis
Morton O. Wagenfeld
R. Greg Emerton

Center for Sociological Research
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001
1973

* The manual and the seminar have been developed with the aid of a grant from the Advanced Science Education Program of the National Science Program. (GZ2298).

CONTENTS

Section	Page
Introduction	1
Rationale for the Seminar	2
The Concept of the Urban Community as Laboratory	4
Specifying Urban Social Problems	11
Objectives of Seminar Participants	16
Seminar Guidelines	18
Research Logistics	20
Format of the Seminar	25
References	29
Appendix: Suggested Research Topics	31

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the seminar is to develop procedures for studying major social problems through the use of the urban community as a laboratory. The manual is intended to provide a common, though preliminary, frame of reference for seminar participants. The subject matter of the manual is based upon several years of planning and an academic year of actual seminar sessions. It is expected that modification will be required to adapt the procedures to fit differing circumstances.

The basic goals of the seminar are:

1) To provide additional depth to graduate programs on urban problems through field application of theoretical perspectives and research techniques.

2) To develop an integrated approach to the study of complex social problems in the community.

3) To advance scientific knowledge of urban problems by providing opportunities not usually available for comprehensive longitudinal studies.

4) To bridge the gap between the community professional and the academician through a mutual process of case finding and research directed toward problem solving.

5) To make technical research assistance and research findings available to the community.

The seminar participants include: project staff, key community professionals; enrolled sociology graduate students; and invited guests. All participants are integral members of an ongoing teaching-research

team. Broadly, the seminar concentrates upon providing access to data and facilitating data collection and analyses. The activities and responsibilities of the participants are specified in later sections.

The manual is designed primarily for use by seminar participants in studying the local community as a laboratory. However, the presentation has considered its possible application to other communities and universities. Suggestions and criticisms by the reader are welcomed.

The contents of the manual are: the rationale for the seminar; the concept of the urban community as a laboratory; specifying urban social problems; objectives of seminar participants; seminar guidelines; research logistics; and the format of the seminar. An appendix contains a list of proposed research topics.

RATIONALE FOR THE SEMINAR

Sociologists and community professionals are aware of the vast, complex array of social problems affecting American cities and of the utility of sociological research in helping to understand and resolve these problems. However, current research techniques are not being applied in systematic and consistent ways. Academicians are usually concerned with narrowly defined topics on a relatively high level of abstraction with limited relevance to community problems.

Community practitioners have to deal directly with specific and concrete problems on a day-to-day basis. Local governments, social agencies, law enforcement personnel, and other community groups are under increasing pressure to develop new programs and to expand facilities to solve problems. Although these community personnel often need addi-

tional knowledge in order to deal with community problems, they lack the personnel and facilities to gather and interpret research data.

Sociology graduate students trained in traditional ways seldom choose topics relevant to community problem-solving. Their researches do not bring them into contact with leading community professionals such as police chiefs, city managers, social welfare directors, and others involved with community problems. Their technical training is focused usually upon topics derived from faculty projects or their academic contacts. As a consequence, theses and dissertations are apt to be pedantic, piece-meal, and, at worst, trivial.

Graduate courses and seminars usually focus upon a substantive social problem such as crime, mental disorder, race relations, or poverty. Such issues are case location, case definition, labeling perspectives, or societal reactions are considered within the context of specific social problems, rather than for their application and relevance to other social problems or their pertinence to specific locales. Graduate reports frequently rely on previously published research or the use of secondary data. Access to original data is difficult in the limited time available within the semester time-frame.

Graduate students have little opportunity to acquire personal experience in direct observation of social problems. Nor do graduate students acquire much experience in the politics and logistics of social problems research. Many social problems involve "touchy" issues requiring the development of skills in dealing with community influentials. Graduate students often acquire their major research experience through faculty projects in which they become familiar with a segment of a

larger research, particularly the processing of data collected by others. As a consequence, graduate students acquire scant experience in the selection and the formulation of research topics. Yet, a major task of the professional sociologist is to initiate, formulate, and conduct independent inquiry.

A further difficulty in graduate training stems from arbitrary distinctions between pure and applied research. Although applied researches may have little theoretical significance, this need not be so (Miller and Gouldner, 1965). Moreover, the academic emphasis placed upon pure research frequently results in the selection of research topics which have little relevance to community problems. For this reason, sociological researches are often unwelcome by community professionals who have pressing problems for which they lack adequate information or guides to possible solutions.

Academicians tend to have only limited contacts with community professionals and, when they do, their relationships are apt to be brief and not always congenial. Procedures are necessary for facilitating community problems research through the active involvement with these professionals. As brief consultations do not provide for systematic community study, an on-going seminar with regular participation by community personnel appears desirable.

THE CONCEPT OF THE URBAN COMMUNITY AS LABORATORY

Increasingly, urban problems have become synonymous with national problems. This country has grown from a nation which--at founding--was almost wholly rural to one in which almost three-quarters of the popu-

lation live in areas defined by the Bureau of the Census as urban or metropolitan. Crime, drug abuse, poverty, mental illness, pollution, racism, inequities in health and medical care are all problems that are national in scope but have received most of their emphasis within the urban context.

As a first concern, it is necessary to arrive at a working conceptualization of the urban community as laboratory. Communities have been defined in spatial, geographic, or legal terms. These definitions tend to be restrictive in character and fail to capture their dynamic quality. If, instead of looking at a community as a geopolitical entity, we regard it as a series of interdependent and interrelated ethnic, socioeconomic, and racial sub-communities bound together by certain common elements into a larger whole, then a more dynamic view of the community is likely to emerge.

For seminar purposes, it appears useful to define the chosen community in locality-specific terms. Specifying appropriate community boundaries and significant community problems are important considerations. Of special concern are community characteristics and problems that are amenable to community-level action. Some of the major perspectives on the urban community are discussed in the following section.

The Urban Community

The sociological study of urban areas and communities is certainly not new: urban and community sociology are well established specialties. The variety of theoretical perspectives in these areas is both a source of many insights and of controversy and confusion. There is no one over-

arching theory of the city or the community which encompasses the variety and richness of urban life. A brief description of these theories will indicate the scope of available theoretical frameworks.

The "Chicago School" of urban sociology was developed in the 1920's and 1930's by sociologists at the University of Chicago (Madge, 1962). The Chicago sociologists employed a variety of research techniques to produce a series of now classic studies on crime and delinquency, housing, ethnic groups, occupations, and mental disorders. Used as a research laboratory, Chicago became the most researched city in America.

For their studies, the Chicago sociologists developed a theory of city structure and growth, built around the biological concept of ecology and using competition for land use as their organizing concept. The basic process of competition, they argued, led to dominance of certain areas by specific functions. Competition was a continuing process so that expansion (invasion) and eventual take over (succession) by a dominant land user was constantly going on. The result was segregation of different functions (and the populations involved) into natural areas. These functions were concentrated not only in the city but within definable areas of the city. In this way, city growth and organization represented a process of centralization due to the competition of various types of land use. The resulting pattern, in their view, was a series of concentric zones containing the city's basic functions and residences of socioeconomic groups.

The ecological theory was subject to criticisms and modifications, notably the introduction of the factor of transportation routes (sector theory of Hoyt) and the phenomenon of not one but many centers (multiple-

nuclei theory of Harris and Ullman).

However, the next major theoretical step was the development of "neo-orthodox ecology," embodied in the work of such sociologists as James Quinn and especially Amos Hawley. Although sympathetic to the classical ecologists, these theorists maintained that the spatial organization of cities is extremely complex and involves more elements than competition. In addition, Hawley recognized the influence of culture by emphasizing that the degree of technology, especially in transportation and communications, influenced the spatial distribution of functions and social phenomena. While the basic processes of city structure and development are similar for different urban areas, we need not expect all cities to develop in the same way, to have similar ecological distribution of land use and functions, or to have the same social problems or to have them to the same degree.

Social area analysis breaks with the ecological school. For example, Shevky and Bell focus on three sociocultural variables: economic status, family status and segregation. Areas of cities are classified according to unique configurations of these variables as measured by operationally defined (using census data) indices. Social area analysis focuses on social organization as opposed to land use of ecological distribution. Such an approach is useful for comparative purposes, measurement of change in a city over time, relating city structure to national or regional stratification, or developing etiologies of various phenomena as related to social structure and distribution of populations in a city. Social area analysis, while a minor school as compared to ecology in urban sociology, has developed useful data and techniques for urban analysis.

In addition to the above theories, there are numerous typologies of the city and the community which can yield useful insights. The polarities of Tonnies (Gemeinshaft-Gesellshaft), Mac Iver (community-association), Redfield (folk-urban), and Sjoberg (preindustrial-industrial) are some of the major contributions. While typologies are limited, they do help to make clear differences in spatial and social structure, legal mechanisms, degree of organization and so on, which can be useful in developing a framework for analysis.

Finally, systems theory approaches have been applied to urban areas. Basically, a city (or community) is seen as a system of systems, or a system whose parts are its various institutions. Each of these social institutions can be analyzed in terms of their component parts (statuses and roles). In turn, the city is a component part of even larger systems (regions, nations). Systems theorists have concentrated on different aspects of this basic scheme. Charles Loomis emphasizes boundary maintenance, systemic linkage and interaction. Roland Warren focuses on the interaction and autonomy of local communities vis-a-vis larger encompassing systems. John Bebout and Harry Bredmeier view the inputs and outputs which flow between different social systems and the various mechanisms for such flow (coercion, bargaining, legal-bureaucratic and identification-solidarity-collaboration). "Functionalism" as developed in anthropology and sociology would also fit here, although little has appeared on urban sociology specifically applying this framework to urban areas.

In addition, there are large bodies of literature on narrower topics like community decision making, community organizations, urban planning

and change.

The Laboratory Conception

The scientific concept of "laboratory" applied to a community requires further consideration. In Karl Pearson's classic definition, science refers to methods of inquiry not to a special domain or subject matter. While science is by no means confined to the laboratory, the community may be conceived of as a fruitful laboratory for the scientific study of social problems. In the classical laboratory situation, a phenomenon is chosen for investigation, experimental and control groups are set up, attempts are made to control for extraneous factors, and differential outcome is studied. While such conditions are rarely--if ever--found outside the walls of laboratories, urban communities afford numerous opportunities for approximations of such laboratory situations. "Fire House Sociology" is a term that has been applied to immediate or very rapid follow-up study of events such as natural disasters or civil disturbances. By having the capability of rapid reaction, the sociologist is able to conduct on-the-spot observation and interviews, thus minimizing the losses of retrospective recall.

Another way in which the urban community may be used as a laboratory is through the use of what have been termed "natural experiments." A major industry with a marked impact on the economy may move into or leave the community. Knowledge of this move permits the possibility of "before" and "after" measures of this variable. Additionally, community innovations such as the opening of comprehensive health centers, school busing, and various educational efforts could be treated within this laboratory

framework. The opportunity to utilize these "natural experiments" will also enable us to make progress toward meeting another pressing national need: the development of measures of program evaluation and effectiveness. The nature of the group assembled for this seminar is especially fruitful for this type of endeavor for two reasons. First, the nature of the problems to be researched will be the product of the interaction between practitioners, academicians, and students. In addition, in the "traditional" laboratory, the researcher must interpret his own findings. In our laboratory, the continuing collaborative arrangement should have impact and feedback on the research as it develops--thus aiding in the process of hypothesis formulation and reformulation.

The community may also be viewed as a laboratory in that the opportunity exists--through the medium of this seminar--to begin to collect a systematic body of data on the community. These data could be related to a wide variety of social indicators (e.g., rates of unemployment, crime and delinquency, housing deterioration, truancy, school leaving, AFDC, illegitimacy, physical and mental health, etc.). Such information would have immediate relevance for research and evaluation, but they would also enable us to go one important step further: to help in the formulation of public policy on the basis of empirical data.

Finally, the community will be the laboratory in the sense that long-range scientific researches designed to identify and alleviate pressing urban social problems can be formulated and carried out. Given the shortness of the program and the inevitable pressures of time, it is not likely that any major researches can be carried to completion during a single semester or academic year. Rather, ideas can be generated, pilot

projects undertaken, and plans for much-needed longitudinal research can be developed.

In summary, the urban community may be viewed as a laboratory for social research through:

1) ecological studies of the composition and distribution of community groups, neighborhoods, or social problems.

2) social system analyses of the interrelationship between various community conditions.

3) developing procedures for studying social conflicts or natural disasters as quickly as possible.

4) observation and evaluation of planned social innovations.

5) continuous accumulation of local data as social indicators of community well-being or problems.

6) longitudinal studies designed to facilitate long-range planning and research.

SPECIFYING URBAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Social problems are defined by many sociologists as conditions which are considered undesirable by members of a society or community. But determining what is considered desirable in a specific community can be problematic. Neither theoretical analyses nor textbooks on social problems provide empirical justification for designating specific topics as areas of local concern. A logical way of ascertaining public perceptions is through a community survey. Although conducting such a survey is beyond our immediate resources, a major goal of the seminar is to initiate the survey plans and to stimulate widespread local interest. An

alternate method is to view social problems from the perspectives of the seminar participants. With this in mind, we adopted three ways of identifying community problems.

1) The seminar staff began the selection of topics with a review of the extensive literature pertaining to urban problems. From this review, sixteen topical areas which appeared pertinent to our locale were selected. These included: Adjustment of Migrants to the City, Chicago Perspectives, City Government, City Planning, Community Organization, Community Health and Mental Health, Crime and Delinquency, Ecological Changes, Housing, Intergroup Relations, Methodology, Police, Poverty, Urban Education, Urban Problems, and Welfare. A large number of studies (representing most of these topics) have been conducted locally. We have compiled a bibliography of selected references which is available in the graduate reading room. A list of the holdings in these areas within the university may also be found in the university library system.

2) Local practitioners have to deal directly with specific and concrete problems on a day-to-day basis. The community professionals participating in the seminar were an excellent source of suggestion. They were interviewed prior to the first meeting and asked what kinds of problems they had which might be addressed by the seminar. The results were categorized into six major areas: a) Evaluation Research, b) Communications, c) Economic Conditions, d) Government, e) Race Relations, and f) Social Maladjustments.

Evaluation Research is concerned with the effectiveness of programs aimed at resolving urban problems. The community professionals suggested

that as sociologists, we need to examine closely the underlying assumptions of our theories before applying them to particular problems. The community professionals also asked that we try to operationalize the concepts used to deal with local problems more precisely. If theory and methods are improved, we may determine whether or not social programs are as fragmented as they appear to be, evaluate the successes and failures of various programs, and thereby improve the efficiency and rationality of allocating limited resources for social improvement.

In the area of Communications, two problems stand out: a) inadequate information or lack of understanding between community residents, public, and private agencies, and b) the ways in which the mass media influence these relationships. Studies analyzing those factors hindering or facilitating communications, and data which could lead to improvement would be of great value.

The social effects of Economic Conditions such as industrial expansion, downtown redevelopment, welfare programs, and unemployment are in need of careful study. Poverty, particularly the distinction between the definition of poverty as an "economic category" and poverty as "subculture" or "way of life", remains a source of puzzlement to many. A major issue is the relationship of poverty and inequality to other urban problems.

In dealing with local Government, four issues were raised: a) the concerns of special interest groups in the enforcement of municipal regulations, b) governmental efficiency and accountability to citizens, c) fragmented governmental services and jurisdictions, and d) social implications of a unified metropolitan government.

Professionals working in the community are acutely aware of the crucial problems of urban Race Relations. The issues of communication, conflict, resolution, education, employment, housing, and the role of the police are important in this area.

Finally, the community professionals are frequently confronted with conditions which we have designated as Social Maladjustment. Here, we included personal pathologies such as drug addiction, alcoholism, mental disorder, delinquency, and other forms of stigmatizing behavior.

3) During its first year of operation, the seminar participants concentrated on identifying, defining, and specifying important local problems. They began by reviewing the areas and topics suggested by the seminar staff and community professionals. We soon learned that while it is relatively easy to designate something as a social problem, it is quite another thing to talk about solution or amelioration at the local level. Solutions to some social problems may be outside the purview of local or regional control (Warren, 1971). One task of the seminar was to specify those problems that appear amenable to local solution or amelioration.

In order to determine the degree of diversity or consensus about local problems, all members of the seminar were asked to list the ten most important social problems in the community. No further instructions were given. The lists were then tabulated and categorized. Given the expected diversity of perspectives, a surprising amount of similarity was found. Seven major areas were delineated. Health and health services delivery was the area of major concern. Other important areas included: intergroup relations, poverty, fragmentation of public and

private services, housing, recreation, and crime. These topics were examined in detail with the aid of specific resource persons during the second semester.

The next phase of the seminar is concerned with implementation and action. In order to carry out proposed activities, we will utilize the instructional concept of "study groups." The study groups will be composed of students working in close collaboration with one of the seminar staff and a community professional or resource person. Each group will be concerned with an intensive examination of a major problem, developing ways of studying it, as well as seeking methods of evaluating pertinent human service programs. These groups will aim at developing social indicators of the problem, devising appropriate research strategies (e.g., an annual survey), looking for local data sources (in liaison with the proposed data bank), and examining ways in which evaluation research can be carried out. Obviously, not all problems can be covered, and the choice of the topics will be determined by student interests, the salience of the problem, and community needs.

These three methods of specifying community problems--reviewing the professional literature, the concerns of the community practitioners, and the seminar consensus--afford a basis for enumerating potential research topics in the local community. A list of these topics is presented at the end of the manual. It is expected that the list will be expanded by seminar participants in the coming years and that the ensuing research will add to the inventory of knowledge available to the community and to society.

OBJECTIVES OF SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the seminar include: staff members, community professionals, and enrolled graduate students. Their tasks are indicated in the sections which follow.

The program staff will seek to establish good working relationships throughout the community, to promote community acceptance of the relevance and legitimacy of social research, and to provide technical assistance in resolving pressing community problems. The staff will be responsible for supervision of the seminar, for arrangements with community professionals, and for supervision and guidance of enrolled students. In addition to these general goals, the program staff will attempt to meet four specific research and theoretical objectives:

1) To assist in developing research procedures and techniques appropriate to comprehensive, longitudinal studies of urban social problems. In addition, special emphasis will be placed on projects suitable for theses and dissertations.

2) To develop and disseminate an inventory of researchable topics relevant to the community. Such an inventory will focus attention on those community problems about which empirical information is lacking, reduce the duplication of research efforts on the part of individuals and organizations, and serve as a directory to sources of research information for members of the community.

3) To clarify the applicability and limitations of research in providing solutions to various kinds of community problems. At times, the utility of research in resolving social problems is ambiguous or dependent upon the viewpoint of individuals and/or organizations concerned.

Clarifying the parameters of social research can help to establish a better relationship between researchers and the community in which they are working.

4) In line with our overall goal of developing an integrated approach to complex urban social problems, the program staff will attempt to specify the social dimensions (theoretical and substantive) of a number of community social problems encountered during the semester.

The community professionals will bring to the seminar information, specialized technical knowledge, and perspectives which are often not available in the academic setting. Such information and knowledge in combination with that provided by other members of the seminar is expected to promote an open dialogue on community problems between themselves and with members of the university. It is further anticipated that the community professionals will be able to take advantage of the opportunities in the program to promote social research in their respective areas.

Among the specific contributions of the community professionals will be: 1) to direct seminar attention to the most critical urban problems in need of research; 2) to guide theoretical and empirical interests of the participants toward applications to community problems; 3) to assist students by providing appropriate information about the community, by helping to arrange field assignments, and by improving the accessibility of local data; and 4) to aid in feedback of research knowledge for the purpose of community education and policy formation.

Graduate students will contribute to the general objectives of the program by acquiring personal familiarity with the urban social problems

discussed in the seminar. They will be expected to become familiar with the logistics of community research including field techniques, the kinds and availability of community data, ethical responsibility, the problem of interest groups, etc. Students are responsible for arranging regular consultations with staff members concerning course requirements and difficulties encountered in their work.

The requirements of the course are 1) active participation in the seminar, 2) field experience through a flexible internship in the community, 3) adding to ones graduate background by reading pertinent course materials, and 4) developing a working paper for the seminar. The paper may report research data obtained through the seminar, may be a prospectus for future research (as for a thesis or dissertation), may recommend policy based upon empirical data for resolving a community problem, or such other projects as may be developed in the seminar.

The paper should be prepared in standard form, including references and documentation. Field notes and a research log should be included in an appendix. This report is to be submitted at the final meeting of the seminar. Course grades will be based upon the quality of the final report and contributions to the seminar.

The aim of all seminar participants is to develop and to share knowledge which may be used to advance our understanding of urban community problems and to assist in their resolution.

SEMINAR GUIDELINES

The following assumptions and operating procedures are specified in order to provide preliminary guidance to the seminar participants:

1) The focus of the seminar is on the entire community viewed as an open social system, rather than as a geographic, political, or legal unit.

2) Although the seminar will seek to develop an inventory of pertinent information and researchable questions for the seminar, the major emphasis will be placed on the most widespread, critical, and ongoing problems of the urban community.

3) Participation in the seminar is open to enrolled graduate students, designated community professionals, and seminar staff members. Others may be invited at appropriate sessions with the approval of the staff.

4) The seminar will provide opportunity for free and open discussion of issues. However, off-the-record remarks will be honored by the participants.

5) Each participant will be assured of free choice of topics for discussion in the seminar. However, the staff of the seminar, through their obligation to the National Science Foundation, are responsible for the progress of the seminar and for limiting discussions which they deem excessive or inappropriate.

6) Controversial issues will be expected and encouraged throughout the seminar. Preconceptions of participants will be open to seminar scrutiny. Policy recommendations may be proposed but must be made on the best evidence made available to the seminar.

7) Information acquired as a result of the seminar will remain the responsibility of the investigator(s). However, individual participants are obligated to report their findings to the seminar participants and to the originating sources of the information.

8) Participants will be fully responsible for the adequacy and the accuracy of their procedures, data, and interpretation. Conjecture and theorizing are necessary but should be so designated.

9) The participants will be expected to preserve the confidentiality of all original data and the sources of such information. Data likely to injure the dignity or the safety of any individual or group in the community will be safeguarded.

10) Although the seminar is conducted locally, emphasis will be placed on knowledge applicable to other communities, organizations, and universities.

RESEARCH LOGISTICS

Conceiving of the urban community as laboratory requires systematic preparation for facilitating research. The research process is not limited to purely technical procedures such as questionnaire construction or statistical analysis. As used here, the term "research logistics" refers to the practical, non-technical aspects of research. The aim is to review the basic phases of inquiry in order to minimize interference and barriers to research and processing research data. This section will consider some aspects of choosing a research topic, conducting research and recording research data.

Choosing the Research Topic

1) Research Involvement: Among the important factors in fruitful research are the interests of the researcher, the significance of the research, and the manageability of the project. Issues of special interest to the individual are most likely to generate effort and ideas. Sig-

nificant problems, rather than trivial topics, are also more likely to produce successful outcomes. With increasing national and local emphasis on action and applied research another consideration for choosing a topic is its utility. These concerns, however, must be balanced against the available time, energy, and other resources of the researcher.

2) Research Application: Some issues encountered in applied research are a lack of understanding of problems involved in implementing research findings and unrealistic ideas about the capabilities of research. Researchers often assume that the presentation of findings will readily result in programmatic or policy changes and are unaware of the importance of political or interest group factors in setting goals or priorities. Some practitioners feel that research can provide answers to all problems, while others feel that it is an expensive luxury or totally without value. Through research projects in the community, this seminar can foster more realistic ideas about the needs and problems of both academic researchers and community professionals.

3) Community Professionals: The unique opportunity to draw upon the knowledge and experience of key community professionals can facilitate the selection of research topics. In preliminary meetings and interviews these professionals suggested a series of research topics (See pp. 12-14). Additional suggestions are expected to emerge from seminar discussions. Specific research questions may also be developed through internship assignments.

4) Staff and Faculty Members: Research topics will be suggested and evaluated by the seminar staff in the regular sessions and in individual consultations. Their appraisals of the feasibility of specific

studies, of the accessibility and quality of potential data, and the availability of needed resources should be obtained. Where specialized advice is appropriate, the seminar staff will consult or make referrals to other sociologists or social scientists.

5) Prior Community Studies: Although "original" research is desirable and important, projects need not be so limited. Replicative research can make important contributions to knowledge and social policy. Prior studies in the community, or in comparable locales, are an excellent source of research ideas. Such investigations are particularly appropriate to the laboratory conception of the urban community.

Conducting Research

1) Obtaining Entree and Acceptance: Successful research is often contingent upon prior approval of appropriate individuals and groups. Currently, university and departmental clearance is required for research using human subjects. Among the relevant concerns are possible harm to participants and the protection of confidential information.

Data from organizational sources usually requires official permission. The prospects of obtaining data depends upon the justification of the research goals, the relevance of the research for the practical needs of the organization, and the possible risks of interference with the functioning of the organization. The researcher must be aware of the dimensions of his role and expertise and should avoid exceeding them. Failure to do so is likely to result in a loss of rapport with group members or closing of the organization to the investigator.

2) Research Assistance: The resources available to the researcher

can greatly influence the quality of the research. Given the time limitations of the seminar format, it is unlikely that students will be able to get substantial monetary support. Limited assistance in the form of postage, duplicating, or photocopying services may be obtained in some instances from the sponsoring agency if the study appears to be useful to their organization. If aid is needed for larger projects such as theses or dissertations, possibilities should be explored with the university's Office of Research Services, community professionals, and other local sources.

Technical advice and assistance is available from the seminar staff and from departmental or university specialists. Some projects useful for research instruction in undergraduate courses may be a basis for requesting aid, such as student interviewers or data analyses.

3) Census Data: Census data is a valuable source of information on a variety of community and population characteristics. The University library has copies of census publications in the community, the state, and the nation. Census tapes, with detailed information on blocks and enumeration districts are also available.

4) Research Clearinghouse: Plans are now being discussed for the establishment of a clearinghouse for research reports. The aim is to create a repository for all studies in the community--both published and unpublished. Research conducted by local government, human service agencies, colleges, and the Upjohn Institute will be housed in a single location, approximately catalogued and indexed for maximum utility. Projects conducted by seminar participants may be included. Once established, the clearinghouse can serve as a source of ideas for inquiry,

as well as supplementary data for projects.

5) Urban Data Bank: It is frequently recognized that a good deal of information exists in the community about its social problems but is not fully used. Law enforcement agencies, governmental departments, and various social and human services agencies compile records and statistics relating to their activities. These data, however, are not housed in any central location or kept in any uniform fashion. As a result, research requiring data on a number of community problems is often quite difficult to carry out. To overcome this difficulty, arrangements are now being made for a formal structure to be jointly operated by the university and the community. A data bank would take raw data from a variety of sources for storage in a uniform, easily accessible fashion. The data bank and clearinghouse can be a useful source of material for theses and dissertations, particularly ones requiring information from a number of agencies. Data gathered from other sources for theses and dissertations may be stored in the data bank for future reference.

6) Annual Community Survey: An important goal of the seminar has been the advancement of scientific knowledge of urban social problems by providing opportunities not usually available for comprehensive longitudinal studies. As one means of bringing this about, an annual community survey is now being planned. The survey will be a community-wide venture to gather attitudinal and objective data on a variety of social problems. The nature of the data gathered may vary somewhat from year to year reflecting academic interests and community needs. Involvement in the planning and conduct of the survey can benefit students by providing them with valuable research training opportunities. Data gathered by the

survey can be a valuable source for theses and dissertations.

Reporting Research Data

1) Field Log: A field log should be maintained as part of the research operation. Field notes should be recorded during the observations or as soon as possible afterwards. Extensive notes are desirable, though some selectivity is also needed. Information obtained from early interviews or observations is helpful in improving data analysis.

2) Seminar Reports: Students will make oral reports to the seminar concerning their internship experiences and findings. At the conclusion of the seminar, written reports are to be prepared as formal, professional papers. Copies of these reports will be made available to the National Science Foundation.

3) Dissemination: The preservation of primary data for use in future research and community planning is one of the intended outcomes of the seminar. However, researchers will retain priority in using their own data for theses, dissertations, or publications. Copies of these materials will be made available to researchers and community planners.

FORMAT OF THE SEMINAR

In designing and conducting this seminar which brings together community professionals with faculty and graduate students, certain distinctive procedures have been developed. The descriptions and suggestions included in this section are based on actual experience but different circumstances may require appropriate modifications.

1) Involving Community Professionals. The professionals invited to participate in the seminar were selected on the basis of their strong

willingness to participate regularly in the program, willingness to work closely with graduate students, and concern with a variety of community problems (e.g., crime, health, etc.). Sessions were scheduled in the late afternoon from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. each each to permit their attendance. An honorarium for their services was provided.

2) Selecting Graduate Students. The seminar appears most suitable for the independent, self-propelling graduate student. Advanced students who have had prior courses in research methods and who have had some prior community experience are especially appropriate. Recruiting such students seems preferable to relying upon class schedule listings or bulletin board types of announcements. Since the seminar differs from other courses, prospective enrollees need to be fully informed concerning procedures and requirements.

3) Seminar Planning. Prior to the formal start of the seminar, a planning session for the community professionals aided in clarifying its aims and procedures. During the opening session, the staff met with enrolled students to assist them in developing seminar projects and field assignments. Each session of the seminar was proceeded by a series of staff planning sessions including a meeting just prior to the seminar and a debriefing session immediately afterwards. A crucial concern was achieving balance between structured and flexible discussion. Without specific agendas, the seminar can become rambling and pointless. However, opportunities must be available for participant suggestions such as potential research topics and questions concerning access to data.

4) Session Proceedings. Formal topics were presented during the first half hour of each session followed by open discussion by other

participants. The concepts of community and of social problems as well as research strategies such as evaluation techniques were among our chosen topics. Discussions emphasized the delineation of researchable topics and appropriate sources of local data. Some of the questions and issues raised during these sessions became the topic of later sessions.

5) Consultants and guests. From time to time throughout the seminar, selected community professionals and specialists were invited to participate in the seminar. Especially helpful were the community professionals who were selected to speak on specific social problems chosen by the seminar participants for intensive consideration. Other staff members from the Department of Sociology and from other social sciences were also invited to sit in on the sessions. Many did and contributed much to the progress of the seminar.

6) Balancing participant interests. While staff and graduate students were interested primarily in theoretical and methodological issues, community professionals were generally more concerned with practical problems and solutions. Working back and forth between these positions was a recurring task for the seminar staff. Similarly, value controversies which occurred frequently required diplomatic resolution. Airing divergent views, however, often led to important research questions.

7) Selecting social problems. The staff began with a listing of community problems which they deemed appropriate. As the seminar progressed, information introduced by the community professionals and by the graduate students resulted in converging viewpoints. Ultimately, seminar participants agreed upon a common set of major community problems for intensive study.

8) Student assignments and projects. During our first semester of the seminar, students were slow to select their field experience assignment. The staff became aware that more personal consultation was needed and increasing emphasis was placed on staff-student conferences. Students reported periodically to the seminar on their experiences in the field, describing their progress, problems, and findings. These efforts facilitated their progress toward developing thesis and dissertations.

9) Research logistics Although the original draft of the manual contained information concerning the practical problems of field study, a number of difficulties were encountered. More seminar emphasis was placed on such problems as the confidentiality of organizational data, of participant observation, and intensive interviewing.

10) Follow-up of the seminar. Many of the research suggestions developed in the seminar go beyond its capabilities. This is particularly true of long range projects such as the development of a data bank or the annual community survey.

Community professionals and consultants are performing a major part in implementing these projectives. Close collaboration with colleagues is also proving helpful. Graduate students are extending the seminar's effective scope through their theses and dissertations. In these ways, the seminar is a catalyst for generating innovative applications of the concept of the urban community as a laboratory for the study of social problems.

REFERENCES

Bebout, John E., and Ronald J. Grele
1964 When Cities Meet: the urbanization of New Jersey. New Jersey: Van Nostrand.

Harris, Chauncy D. and Edward L. Ullman
1945 "The nature of cities." Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 242(November):7-17.

Hawley, Amos H.
1950 Human Ecology; a theory of community structure. New York: Ronald Press.

Hoyt, Homer
1970 According to Hoyt: 53 years of Homer Hoyt; Articles on law, real estate cycle, economics, sector theory, shopping centers, urban growth: 1916-1969. Washington.

Loomis, Charles P.
1960 Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change. Princeton: Van Nostrand and Company.

MacIver, Robert M.
1970 On Community, Society, and Power; selected writings. Edited with an introduction by Leon Bramsen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Madge, John H.
1962 The Origins of Scientific Sociology New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Miller, S. M. and Alvin W. Gouldner
1965 Applied Sociology: Opportunities and Problems. Edited by S. M. Miller and Alvin Gouldner for the Society for the Study of Social Problems. New York: Free Press.

Pearson, Karl
1895 The Grammar of Science. New York: Charles Scribner.

Quinn, James A.
1971 Human Ecology. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books.

Redfield, Robert
1947 "The Folk Society." The American Journal of Sociology Vol. 52:293-308.

Schevky, Eshref and Wendell Bell
1955 Social Area Analysis. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Sjoberg, Gideon
1955 "The Preindustrial City." The American Journal of Sociology LX(March):438-445.

Tonnies, Fredinand
1957 Community and Society. Translated and edited by Charles P. Loomis. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press.

Warren, Roland L.
1971 "Types of purposive social change at the community level." Pp. 7-34 in Truth, Love and Social Change. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company.
1972 The Community in America (2nd ed.). Chicago: Rand McNally.

APPENDIX

Suggested Research Topics

A. Research Logistics

1) Evaluation techniques for studying community problem solving techniques.
2) Developing a data bank to compile information on community problems.
3) Formulating social indicators of community problems.
4) Annual survey of prevalence of community problems.

B. Health Care and Services

1) What are the patterns of health care delivery systems in the community? How do they compare with other communities of comparable size?
2) What impact does specialization have on delivery of health service?
3) What are the attitudes and perceptions in the community toward/ of the Family Health Center?
4) Social class and health differences.
   a) knowledge of healthful living practices.
   b) determining the need of medical attention.
   c) availability of services.
5) Patent medicine usage and health.
6) Extent of drug addiction.
7) Accountability of health service organizations.
8) Study of local alcohol problems.
9) Community acceptance of former mental patients.

C. Government Services and Facilities

1) Extent and avenues of citizen involvement.
2) Perceptions of governmental services.
3) Evaluation of citizen needs and the efficiency of governmental agencies in meeting these needs.
4) Factors hindering the employment of women in governmental organization (see also: economic problems).
5) Investigate the elements of organization which facilitate or constrain service to selected populations (see also: health service).

D. Economic Problems

1) Why don't elderly people and other groups with limited income take advantage of various assistance programs?
2) The social effects of decentralizing urban retail commerce.
3) A longitudinal study of the social characteristics and circumstances of present and former welfare recipients.
4) Do universities draw a disproportionate number of talented people who might otherwise be employed elsewhere in the community?

E. Housing

1) A comparison of the social characteristics of apartment and single-family dwelling and their respective impact on the community.
2) Problems of housing code enforcement.
3) Aesthetic values related to housing.
4) Low income housing needs and facilities.

F. Race Conflict

1) Minority political pressures in the community.
2) Implications of the differences between school desegregation and school integration.
3) Investigation of factors within both the community and the police department which block the effective recruitment and retention of minority police officers.
4) A comparative study of the relative rates of participation between minority and majority groups in community activities.
5) A study of conflict prevention.
6) A study of the relative rates of change in minority-majority participation in the community over time.

G. Recreation and Leisure

1) Parks and recreation facilities and usage.
2) Adult education needs.
3) A study of proprietary rights of organizations concerned with recreation and leisure.

H. Crime and Law Enforcement

1) Study of personal safety on city streets versus the public image of the situation.
2) Do the guidelines suggested by the concept of professionalism change among police officers and others when collective bargaining is introduced?
3) Are university personnel more tolerant of unlawful behavior than other citizens in the community at large? Does this account for any variation in crime rate from community to community?
4) What roles are there for social agencies in crime and law enforcement?

I. Other Community Problems

1) Does the community at large view social problems as solvable?
2) A study of value orientations and perception of social problems in the community.
3) A study of the social relationships involved in funding community programs.
4) Social characteristics of decision makers in the community.
5) Factors influencing and intervening between program planning and implementation.